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ABSTRACT

This report provides a snapshot of the former Toronto (Ontario, Canada) secondary schools as they were in the spring of 1997. The 1997 survey of secondary school students is the ninth in a series going back to 1970. Data from these surveys is used in identifying student needs and developing programs to help students of all backgrounds to achieve in school. In 1997, a total of 21,237 student surveys were received from the regular secondary schools, and 1,535 surveys were received from students in the adult secondary schools. In the past 10 years, the Toronto secondary school system has been becoming more diverse racially and culturally. The percentage of non-White students has gone from 38% in 1987 to 53% in 1997, and students in Toronto represent a wide spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds. Overall, students' perceptions about their schools, teachers, and the curriculum were positive. About three of four students were involved in extracurricular activities, and about 40% volunteered in school. Information was also collected on student computer use, program levels and program participation, future plans, and self-ratings of various skills. Less than half of the students reported that their parents were involved in school activities. The results provide an overall profile of students in the Toronto school district. Four appendixes contain tables of students by country of birth and cultural religious background, student perceptions of the curriculum, and cost as a barrier to participation in school activities. (Contains 9 tables, 25 figures, and 4 references.) (SLD)

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The 1997 Every Secondary Student Survey: Preliminary Findings

Maisy Cheng

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The 1997 Every Secondary Student Survey: Preliminary Findings

June 1998

by
Maisy Cheng
Maria Yau

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Executive Summary

This report provides a snapshot of the student population in the former Toronto secondary schools in the spring of 1997. It informs administrative, teaching and support staff about the needs of the students. Such information is essential for ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all students to strive their best in school.

Student Characteristics

- Toronto secondary school population has become more and more diverse racially and culturally in the past ten years. The percentage of non-White students has gone up from 38% in 1987 to 53% in 1997.
- The 1997 survey captured for the first time the religious diversity of the student population. While about 40% of the secondary students identified themselves as Christian (including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant), over one-fifth of the population were Buddhist, Moslem, Jewish or Hindu.
- Students came from families that varied in structure. While the majority of students lived with two parents, one-fifth resided with lone parents and one-tenth lived with guardians or on their own.
- Students in Toronto represented a wide spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds, where almost an equal representation of students came from high, medium and low socio-economic status families.
- This survey also collected for the first time data on disability. Four percent of the students reported having a disability, mainly in the areas of learning and vision.

Students' feelings about school, their teachers and the curriculum

Overall, students' perceptions about their school, teachers and the curriculum were positive. The majority (over 60%) of students felt that:

- they belonged to their school; other students in school showed respect for each other; and extra help was available at school "all the time" or "often"
- "all" or "many" of their teachers showed respect for the students' race/culture/religion, and evaluated the students' work and tests fairly
- the achievements, contributions and experiences of the different racial groups and women were covered in the curriculum
- neither gender, race/culture/religion, disability, sexual orientation nor cost was an obstacle to their full participation in school activities
- school prepared them for the future

Students' involvement in out-of-class activities

- About 40% of the secondary students volunteered in school, mostly as reading buddies or tutors. Outside of school, about half of the students volunteered their help, mainly in community services (such as hospital and food bank volunteers), tutoring and coaching sports.
- About three out of four students were involved in extracurricular activities (at least a few times a year) in school and outside of school. Their involvement was mostly in sports.
- Secondary students tended to spend more time on leisure activities (15 hr/week), part-time work (12 hr/week) and television (12 hr/week) than on homework (of 11 hr/week).

- Half of the students worked part-time and/or helped in family businesses. Cashier/store clerk, babysitter and waiter/waitress represented the most common types of part-time jobs for secondary students.
- About half of the students reported receiving help in doing their homework. The assistance usually came from their parents, friends and siblings.

Students' use of computers

- Almost one in four students had little or no access to computers at home, but the lack of access to home computers was more common for poor students (42%) than well-to-do (10%) students. However, the technological gap was lessened by the availability of school computers. Indeed, more low SES students (50%) reported frequent use of school computers than their high SES peers (37%).
- Computers were used mostly for the purposes of writing, playing computer games and information search.

Program level and school program participation

- Most (70%) students in Grade 10-OAC were enrolled in Advanced programs. About a quarter were in Advanced/General or General programs and 1% in Basic programs.
- More than 10% of secondary students had participated in each of the following types of programs at school: ESL, International Languages, French Immersion, Gifted/Enrichment, Co-op and Peer Mentoring programs.

School awards

- About half of the secondary students had received school awards in school and out of school, and the most common awards received were in sports.

Students' future school and career plans

- Approximately half of the secondary school students intended to go to university after they finish secondary school.
- Only a quarter of the students had a future career in mind. The most common career aspirations for male and female secondary students were different: while computer-related and engineering jobs ranked top for males, doctor and teacher ranked top for females.
- More than half of the secondary students made their career decisions on their own, and one-fifth with the help of their parents.
- Almost 40% of students felt that school provided enough help to them in planning their future careers. About one-third of those students who felt the lack of help from school indicated that they needed help in choosing a future career.

Students' self rating of various skills

- Most secondary students considered themselves good in social skills but only about one-third felt the same way about their organizational skills. Most students considered themselves comfortable or somewhat comfortable speaking up in class.

Parental involvement

- Less than half of the students reported their parents were involved in school activities regularly. Teacher-parent interviews, by far, drew the largest proportions (about one-third) of parents to school compared to other school activities.

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Introduction

History and Background

Since 1970, the former Toronto Board of Education has been conducting its system-wide student surveys on a periodic basis. The 1997 Survey is the ninth in the series.[1] The first survey in 1970 was requested by the Board's Special Committee re Educating New Canadians. Its purpose, apart from obtaining a description of the student population, was to ascertain whether students of all backgrounds had an equal access to various school programs regardless of their birthplace, home language and socio-economic class. Specifically, the question posed in the 1970 Survey was: "Do a disproportionate number of the children of poor people and immigrants go to special classes?" (Wright, 1970, p.1.)

Subsequent surveys were conducted to update the student profiles and to address equity issues related to student outcomes. In 1987, the Race Relations Committee made a specific request to examine the relationships between various student characteristics and schooling outcomes. (Cheng, et al., 1989, p.1). Since then, student achievement data (such as school marks and credit accumulation) have been examined side by side with data collected from the Every Student Survey to identify barriers to student achievements.

Over the years, the scope of the surveys has been expanded to meet the demands for more information about the characteristics of the changing student population. For example, in the 1991 survey, new items on student demographic backgrounds, students' perceptions of school and other student characteristics (such as homework habits and part-time work) were included to obtain a more comprehensive picture about factors that might influence student outcomes. (Brown, et al., 1992.)

The data yielded by these surveys have been used by Board's officials in identifying student needs and in developing special programs to assist students of all backgrounds to achieve in school. The information has also been used by community groups to better understand and serve the needs of their children and youth.

Purpose

Similar to the previous surveys, the current survey attempts to:

- provide an update and comprehensive profile of the changing student population in the system
- identify the needs of the students from various backgrounds
- monitor students' outcomes over time.

Planning and Preparation

After the release of the last survey reports, the Research and Assessment Department had received numerous requests to include additional questions for this survey from various Board committees, staff and community groups. In the fall of 1996-97, a special work group was formed to develop the new survey based on these submissions.[2] The draft items were shared with various groups (such as the teacher federations) and staff members in specific fields for feedback and suggestions.

---

[1] Previous surveys were conducted in 1970, 1975 (all elementary and secondary students), 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983 (all grade 9 students), and 1987 and 1991 (all secondary students).

[2] The 10-member work group composed of a senior superintendent, two principals, and staff members who work with the community, as well as staff from the Curriculum Division and the Equal Opportunity Office.

The pilot versions of the survey were tried out with over 100 students in three secondary schools in December 1996. After further revisions, the questionnaire was finalized in April 1997. Similar to the last survey, the 1997 survey contained two versions. All students were expected to fill out one version of the survey in class. Both forms shared 19 common questions pertaining to the students' socio-demographic backgrounds and their enrolment in special programs. The remaining questions that covered a variety of areas (such as students' attitudes, after school activities and future plans) were unique to only one of the forms. The forms were translated into the five most frequently spoken languages for students who needed the translations.

A few weeks before the administration of the survey, school superintendents and principals were notified about the forthcoming survey and the principals were encouraged to inform the parents about the event through their school newsletters or other means of communication.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey forms were distributed to all the secondary schools in the former Toronto Board of Education (including adult day schools) in May 1997. A total of 22,772 completed forms (21,237 students in the regular secondary schools, and 1,535 in the adult schools) were returned. The response rate was 79% compared to 83% in the last survey.

Organization of the Results

Because of the large amount of data collected, the findings will be covered in more than one report. This report will present an overall profile of the secondary school students in the former Toronto Board of Education.[3] Specifically, it will highlight

- the students' social-demographic profiles
- students' perceptions about their school, their teachers and the curriculum
- students' involvement in out-of-class activities
- students' use of computers
- secondary school program level of students
- students' enrolment in special school programs
- types of school awards received by students
- students' future school and career plans
- students' self ratings of various skills
- parental involvement in school

Subsequent reports will present a more in-depth analysis of the student population, and examine students' outcomes in relation to the various factors covered in the survey.

[3] Only students in the regular schools are included in this report to make comparisons with the past surveys consistent. Results for adult schools will be dealt with separately.

Findings

Part I: Social-Demographic Profile of Toronto Secondary Students, 1997

Gender

Similar to the findings in previous survey, there were slightly more male (52%) than female (48%) students in Toronto secondary schools in the spring of 1997.

Country of birth

Over half (58%) of the secondary students were Canadian-born. (See Table 1.) The remaining foreign-born students came from the following regions:

- 24% from Asia (mostly from China/Hong Kong, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and the Philippines);
- 7% from Europe (mainly from Portugal/Azores, Poland, Russia, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, UK, and Romania);
- 3% from the Caribbean (predominantly from Jamaica and Trinidad/Tobago);
- 3% from South and Central America (mainly from Guyana, El Salvador, Ecuador, Brazil, Guatemala, Peru, and Nicaragua);
- 3% from Africa (mostly from Ethiopia and Somalia); and
- 2% from the Middle East (largely from Iran and Turkey).

For more detailed information about the countries of birth within each region, see Appendix 1.

Table 1: Place of Birth of Toronto Secondary Students, 1987, 1991 and 1997

Region	1987	1991	1997
Canada	58%	57%	58%
Asia	22%	24%	24%
Europe	8%	7%	7%
South & Central America	4%	3%	3%
Caribbean	4%	3%	3%
Africa	1%	3%	3%
Middle East	3%	2%	2%
Other			1%

It is noteworthy that while the proportion of Canadian-born students has been stable over the last 10 years, their racial make-up has changed substantially. For example, among students born in Canada, the share of Asian students has increased from 10% to 16% between 1991 and 1997, while the share of White students has dropped from 78% to 70%. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: Distribution of Racial/Cultural Groups by Place of Birth: 1991, 1997

Racial Group	Canadian-born		Foreign-born	
	1991	1997	1991	1997
Aboriginal	1%	3%	1%	1%
White	78%	70%	22%	19%
Black	6%	6%	14%	13%
Asia	10%	16%	57%	56%
Other (Latin American, Middle Easterner)	5%	6%	5%	12%
Total	100%	101%	100%	100%

Foreign-born students

On average, foreign-born secondary students arrived in Canada around 12 years of age, have had about eight years of formal schooling and five years of English instruction before their arrival to Canada.

First language

In 1997, less than half of the secondary students (48%) learned English and/or French as their mother tongue. A similar proportion (45%) learned a language other than Canada's official languages as their mother tongue. This pattern has remained almost unchanged between 1991 and 1997. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: First Languages of Secondary Students, 1997

First Languages	1987	1991	1997
English/French only	52%	46%	48%
English/French/Other	15%	9%	8%
Other only	33%	45%	45%

However, it is worth noting that although the overall percentage of students speaking a non-official language has remained constant at 45% between 1991 and 1997, the make up of language groups has continued to change. For example, while students speaking mother tongues such as Portuguese, Greek and Italian have decreased steadily over time, those speaking first languages such as Spanish, Tamil, Tagalog, Korean, Russian and Urdu have increased. (See Table 4.)

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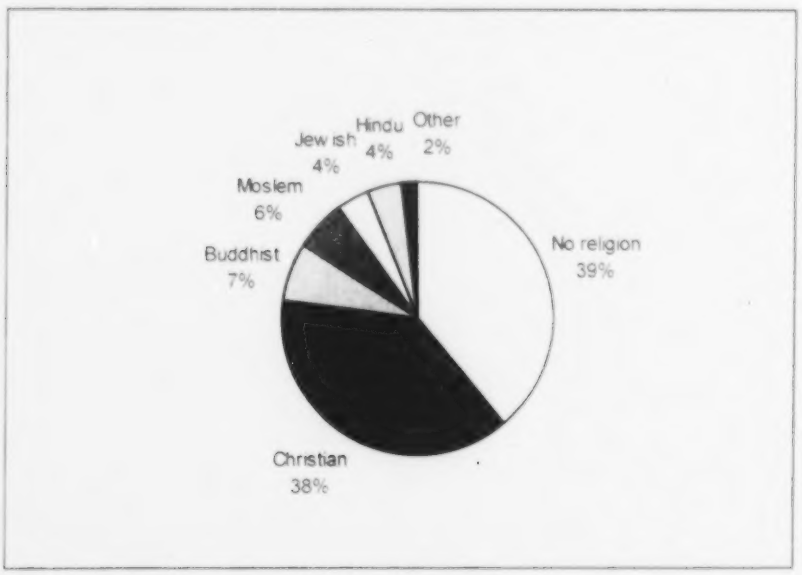
Religion

About 40% of the secondary students reported having no religion. A similar percent of students (38%) identified themselves as Christian (including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant). The other 20% of the population mainly consisted of Buddhist (7%), Moslem (6%), Jewish (4%) and Hindu (4%) students. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Religious Affiliation of Secondary Students, 1997



Appendix 2 shows a detailed breakdown of the cultural identities of the students according to their religion.

- Christian (Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox) students were very multi-cultural. Seventy cultural groups were represented, but those of British, Portuguese, Caribbean, Greek, Latin American, Italian, Filipino and Chinese ancestry made up about three-quarters of all Christian students.[4]
- In contrast, Buddhist students were culturally homogeneous. Almost all (93%) Buddhist students were of Chinese or Vietnamese origins.
- Moslem students identified themselves with over thirty cultural groups, the majority (79%) of whom were Pakistani, Somali, Bengali, East Indian, Iranian, Turkish, Caribbean, and Ethiopian.
- Hindu students were mainly (95%) of Tamil, East Indian and Caribbean descent.
- Most (89%) of the students who considered Judaism their religion also identified themselves as Jewish culturally.

[4] Catholic students accounted for 18% of the total secondary population. They represented over 50 cultural groups, but six of these groups (Portuguese, Italian, Spanish/Latin American, Filipino, Polish, and Caribbean) accounted for about three-quarters of all Catholic students. The percentages of Protestant and Christian-Orthodox cannot be broken down because some students of Protestant faith interpreted "Christian-Orthodox" to mean Christian (Protestant) and checked off "Christian-Orthodox" as their religion.

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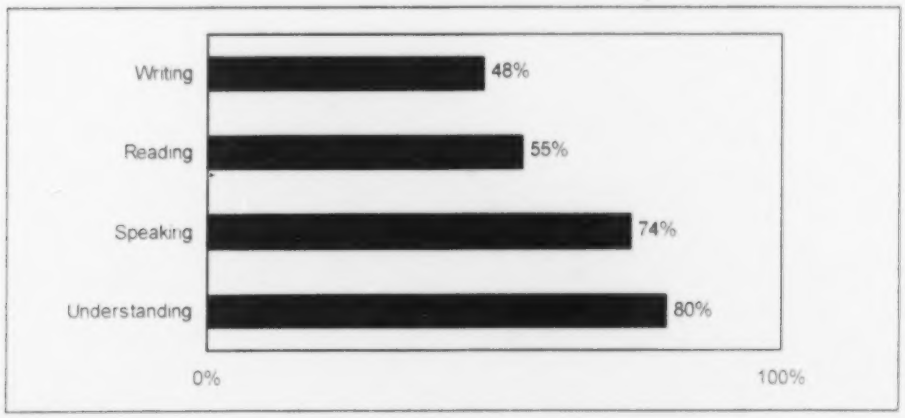
Table 4: The Most Common Mother Tongues other than English or French Spoken by Toronto Secondary Students, 1987, 1991 and 1997

Languages	1987	1991	1997
Chinese	15%	15%	15%
Portuguese	8%	8%	5%
Vietnamese	5%	5%	5%
Spanish	3%	3%	4%
Tamil	1%	2%	3%
Tagalog	1%	1%	2%
Greek	5%	4%	2%
Korean	1%	1%	2%
Polish	1%	1%	1%
Persian	1%	1%	1%
Italian	4%	2%	1%
Russian	<1%	<1%	1%
Urdu	<1%	<1%	1%

Among students whose first language was neither English nor French, the majority could understand (80%) and speak (74%) their mother tongue with ease. However, only approximately half could read (55%) and write (48%) in their first languages with no difficulty. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: First Language Proficiency of Students other than English, 1997 (% of students with no difficulty in their first language in terms of:)



Racial Ethnic Backgrounds

Table 5 shows that in 1997, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity was a reality in the classrooms of the Toronto secondary schools. The student population comprised of:

- 47% White (e.g., British, Greek, Italian, Jewish, Polish, and Portuguese)
- 19% East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean)
- 7% South East Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese)
- 7% South Asian (e.g., Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Tamil)
- 10% Black (e.g., African, Caribbean, Ethiopian, Somali)
- 2% Aboriginal (e.g., First Nations, non-status Indian, Aboriginal persons from Central/South America)
- 3% Middle Easterner (e.g., Afghan, Arab, Iranian, Turkish)
- 3% Latin American (e.g., Central/South American)
- 3% bi-racial/multi-racial

Table 5 : Racial Distribution of Toronto Secondary Students -- 1987, 1991 and 1997

Racial/Cultural Groups	1987	1991	1997
White	62%	54%	47%
East Asian	17%	20%	19%
South East Asian	5%	5%	7%
South Asian	2%	4%	7%
Black	7%	9%	10%
Aboriginal	1%	1%	2%
Middle Eastern	6% (other)	1%	3%
Latin American		3%	3%
Bi-racial/ Multi-racial		2% (other)	3%

The 1997 distribution, compared to 1991 and 1987, shows a steady increase in the percentages of South East Asian, South Asian, Black, Aboriginal, Middle-Eastern and bi-racial/multiracial students. The proportion of non-White students has increased from 38% to 53% within a decade. This finding confirms that the racial/cultural composition of Toronto student population has become more and more heterogeneous over the last ten years.

Disabilities

Approximately 4% of the secondary student population considered themselves to have a disability. The two most frequently mentioned conditions were learning and visual disabilities. The other types of disabilities were each reported by less than 0.5% of the population.

Table 6: Types of Disabilities of Secondary Students, 1997

Disabilities	Overall
Learning	1.9%
Seeing	0.7%
Hearing	<0.5%
Speaking/reading/writing	<0.5%
Moving around/mobility	<0.5%
Attention deficit	<0.5%
Medical	<0.5%
Mental/psychological	<0.5%

Parental Presence

Almost two-thirds (64%) of Toronto secondary students lived with their parents in 1997. One-fifth (21%) resided with their mothers only, and 4% with fathers only. The remaining students either lived on their own (4%), or with guardians/relatives (6%). This pattern has stayed almost the same over the last decade. (See Table 7.)

Table 7: Parental Presence in the Homes of Secondary Students, 1987, 1991, 1997

Parental Presence	1987	1991	1997
Both parents	65%	63%	64%
Mother only	20%	18%	21%
Father only	5%	3%	4%
On my own	10%	9%	4%
Others (guardians, relatives)		7%	6%

It is worth noting that students born in Europe and Canada showed the highest percentages living with both parents. On the other hand, students born in the Caribbean had the highest proportions (about 50%) living with mother only or father only, and students born in Africa had the highest percentages (50%) residing with guardians/relatives or living on their own. (See Table 8.)

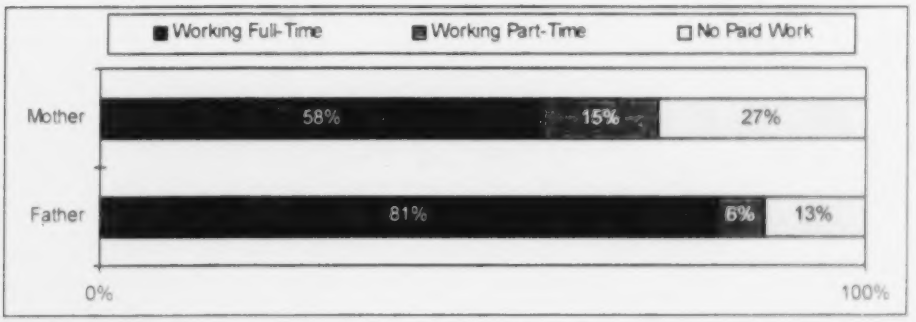
Table 8: Parental Presence at Home by Birthplace of Secondary Students, 1997

Birthplace	Both Parents	Mother only	Father only	On my own	Guardian
Canada	69%	21%	4%	2%	3%
Asia	62%	19%	5%	5%	10%
Europe	71%	18%	3%	3%	5%
South & Central America	53%	25%	6%	7%	9%
Caribbean	34%	41%	7%	8%	10%
Africa	25%	19%	6%	24%	26%
Middle East	58%	18%	5%	9%	10%
OVERALL	64%	21%	4%	6%	4%

Parents' employment status

Most students (81%) indicated that their fathers worked full-time and about a tenth (13%) reported that their fathers were unemployed or retired. In comparison, over half (58%) of the mothers worked full-time and about a quarter (27%) did not have a paid job. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3: Employment Status of Parents of Secondary Students, 1997



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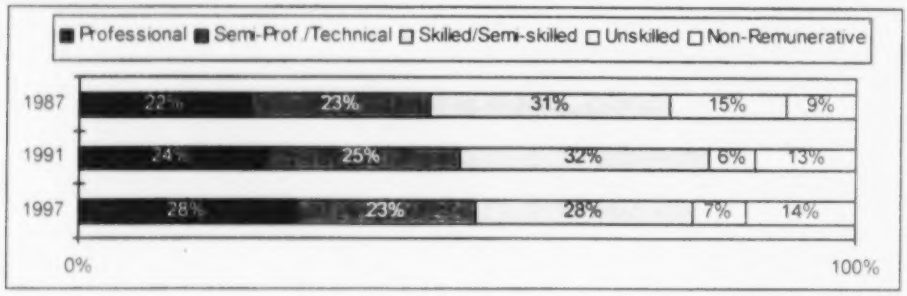
Parents' occupations

In 1997, approximately half (51%) of the students reported at least one of their parents was employed in a professional or semi-professional or technical job.[5] Over a quarter (28%) of the respondents reported their parents' occupations as skilled or semi-skilled, and 7% as unskilled. Fourteen percent of the students came from families where their parents were unemployed, retirees or students. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4: Occupation of Parents of Secondary Students, 1987, 1991 & 1997



Parents' education

In 1997, about a quarter (26%) of the secondary students did not provide information about their parents' education, 39% reported university, 12% community college, 17% secondary school and 6% elementary school as their parents' highest level of educational attainment.[6]

It should be noted that there is a varying degree of underestimation in the percent distribution for each category, due to the 26% missing information. However, one may speculate that the underestimation is small for the university group, but greater for the low educational categories. For example, among students who gave no information about their parents' education, only 7% reported their parents' occupation as 'professional', but 61% reported 'unskilled' or 'unemployed' as their parents' occupation. With this cautionary note, one may say at least 39% of the parents of secondary students had university education.

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[5] Similar to the last two surveys, parents' occupations were classified under a modified scheme of the Pineo-Porter-McRoberts scale. Some common examples of occupations for each category were: 1) Professional/high management - school teachers, accountants, engineers, lawyers, social workers, bank president; 2) semi-professional/technical/middle management -- office managers, computer programmers, nurses, restaurant owners; 3) skilled/semi-skilled - carpenters, auto-mechanics, office workers, salespersons, factory workers; 4) unskilled - waiters, caretakers, taxi drivers, domestic workers, baby-sitters. For more details, please refer to Appendix 8 of Research Report #191 (Cheng et. al., 1989). In the case of two-parent families, the higher SES of the two parents was considered; and in the case of single-parent families, the occupation of the parent with whom the student lived was used.

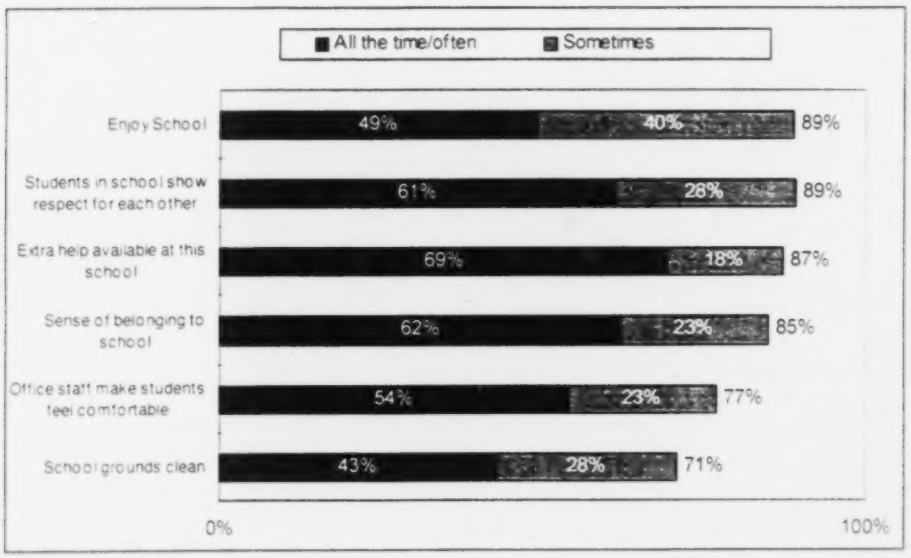
[6] In 1991, 26% of the secondary students omitted the question on their parents' educational attainment, 32% reported university, 12% community college, 20% secondary school and 9% elementary school as their parents' highest level of education.

Part II: Student Perceptions of School, their Teachers, and the Curriculum

Students' perceptions of their school

Most students perceived their schools positively. Nearly 90% of the students indicated they enjoyed school, although it should be noted that the proportion who felt this way "all the time" or "often" was 49%. Over half of the students agreed that they felt a sense of belonging to school; their peers showed respect for each other; school help was available when they needed it, and that the office staff was friendly "all the time" or "often". (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5: Secondary Students' Perceptions of their School



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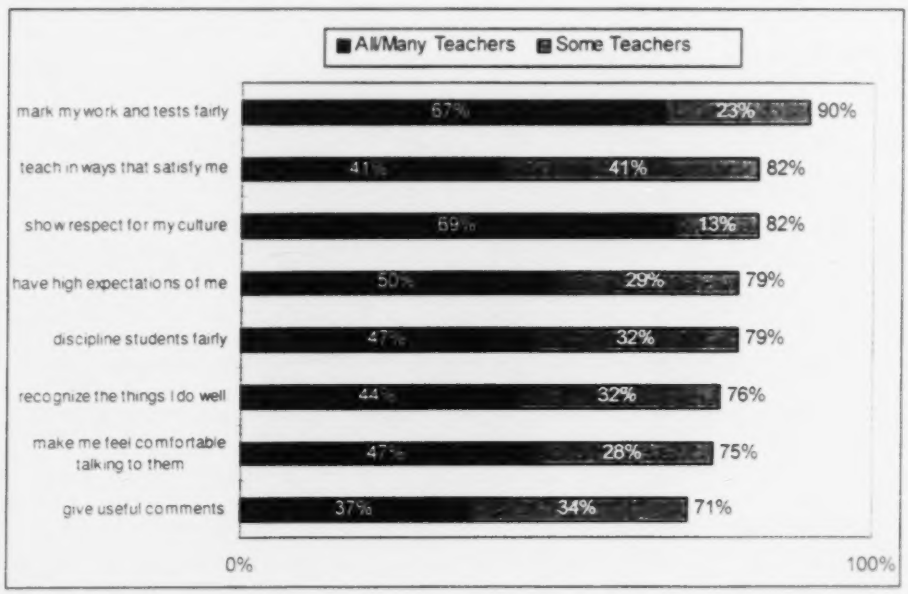
Students' perceptions of their teachers

Students, in general, thought positively about their teachers. About two-thirds of Toronto secondary students agreed that all or many of their teachers showed respect for and understanding of their racial/ethnic/cultural/religious backgrounds (69%) and marked their work and tests fairly (67%). Half of the students felt that many teachers had high expectations of them in their schoolwork. The smallest percentage of students (37%) thought they received useful comments and suggestions from all or many of their teachers. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6: Secondary Students' Perceptions of their Teachers
(% of students who agreed that their Teachers treated them in the following ways:)

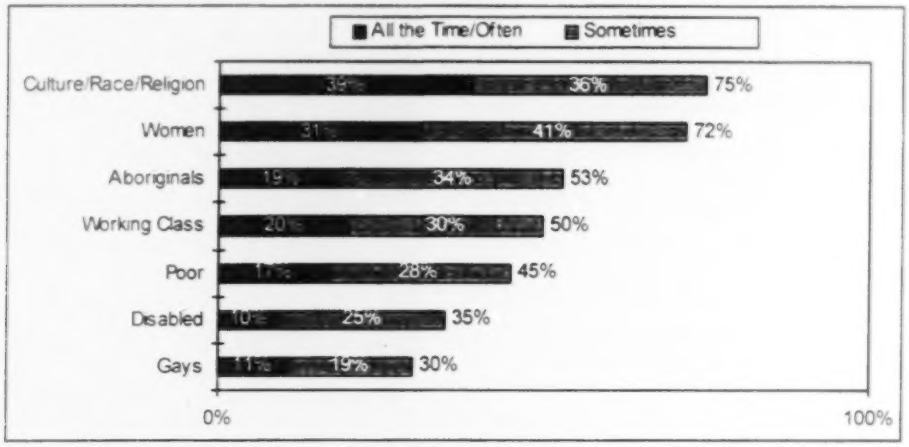


Students' perceptions of the curriculum

The majority of secondary students agreed that they learned about the achievements, contributions and experiences of different cultural, ethnic, racial or religious groups (75%) and women (72%) at least sometimes in school. In contrast, only about one-third felt they learned about persons with disabilities (35%) and gays/lesbians/bisexuals (30%) as frequently as the other groups, namely women, different cultural/racial groups, Aboriginal, working class and the poor. (See Figure 7.) Interestingly, this percent distribution more or less reflects the history of each program. For example, those programs on race and gender issues, which have the longest history, were acknowledged by more students as having been covered in the curriculum than programs that were introduced in recent years, such as those on disability and gay/lesbian issues.

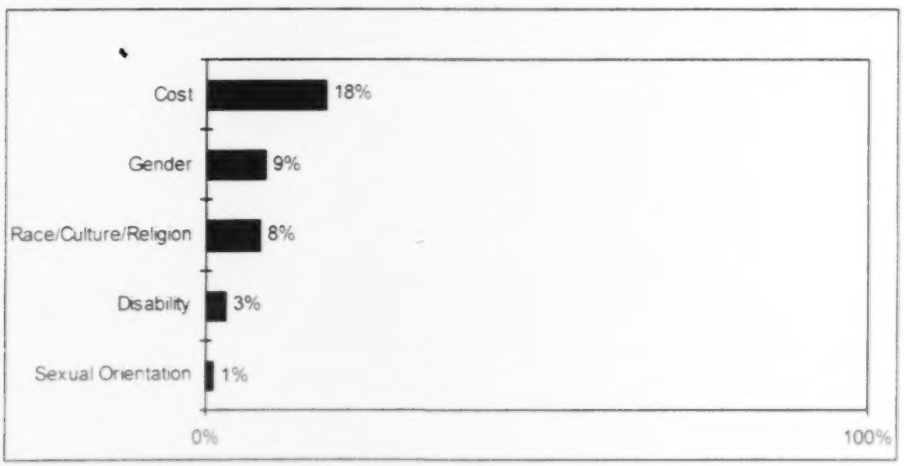
Appendix 3 shows that the perceptions of students about the inclusiveness of the curriculum were quite consistent among males and females and students from different socio-economic classes, and various racial, cultural, religious backgrounds. Similarity in perceptions was also found between students with disability and those without disability.

Figure 7: Secondary Students' Perceptions of their Curriculum
(% of students who thought they have learned the achievements of the following groups in class:)



When secondary students were asked to indicate whether their gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation or high cost was likely to prevent them from participating in various school activities, the majority felt that none of these was a barrier. If these factors were a barrier, cost was most likely to be one (18%), followed by gender (9%), race (8%), disability (3%) and sexual orientation (1%). (See Figure 8.)

Figure 8: Students' Perceptions of Possible Barriers to Participation in School Activities, 1997



It should be noted that although cost was cited by more students as a barrier than other factors, socio-economic status (as measured by parents' occupations) did not seem to bear any relation to their perceptions. The proportions of students from the lower SES groups who regarded cost as an obstacle was not higher than those from the higher SES groups. (See Appendix 4.) This could be attributed partly to local school efforts and the Board's special programs such as Student Assistance Program that subsidized needy students to acquire supplies and gym equipment to facilitate their participation in various school activities. Other special programs, such as Outdoor Education and Natural Science, Art at the Boyne, Dramatic Arts Festival and Urban Education provided opportunities for students of low income families access and exposure to various enrichment

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activities which they otherwise could not afford.[7]

It should further be noted that although other types of perceived barriers were small (cited by 1%-9% of the students), there were differences in perceptions among groups. For example, three times as many females as males considered gender a factor in discouraging them from participating in some school activities. In addition, Asian, Black, Aboriginal, Middle Eastern, and Latin American students were more likely than White and bi-racial students to feel their race, culture, and/or religion could prevent them from taking part in some school functions. Buddhist, Hindu and Moslem students were more likely than Christian and Jewish students to perceive their race/culture/religion as a barrier to full participation in school. Finally, a higher proportion of students with disability (18%) than those without disability (2%) viewed disability as a factor in holding students back from certain school activities.

Slightly less than half (47%) of the students said they learned to recognize biases and stereotypes in textbooks at school. Interestingly, more students with this type of training than those without training felt that parts of their learning materials were racist, sexist or biased against certain groups (44% vs. 28%).

In addition to asking students about the inclusiveness of the curriculum, they were also asked to indicate how well they felt the curriculum prepared them for their future. About two thirds (63%) of the students agreed what they learned in school prepared them for their future, the remaining students either disagreed (18%) or were not sure (19%).

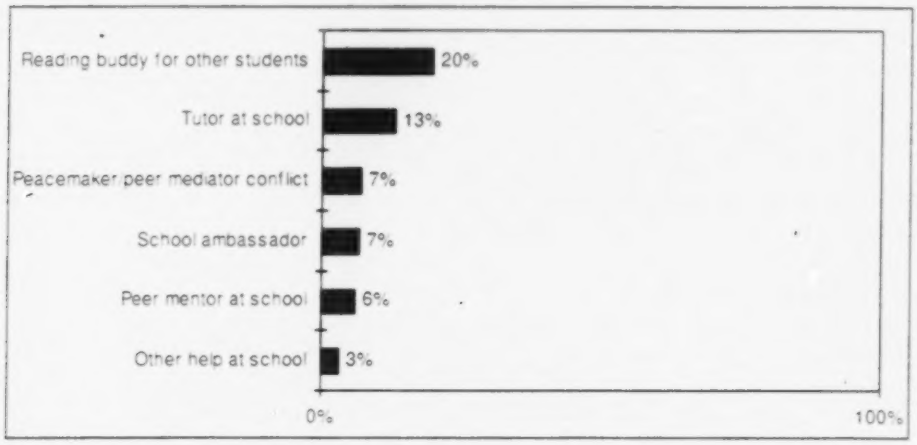
[7] For a full list of this kind of programs, please refer to a special report on Meeting the Special Needs of Students (Toronto Board of Education, 1997, pp. 10, 18-19).

Part III: Students' Involvement in Out-of-Class Activities

Volunteer work at school and outside of school

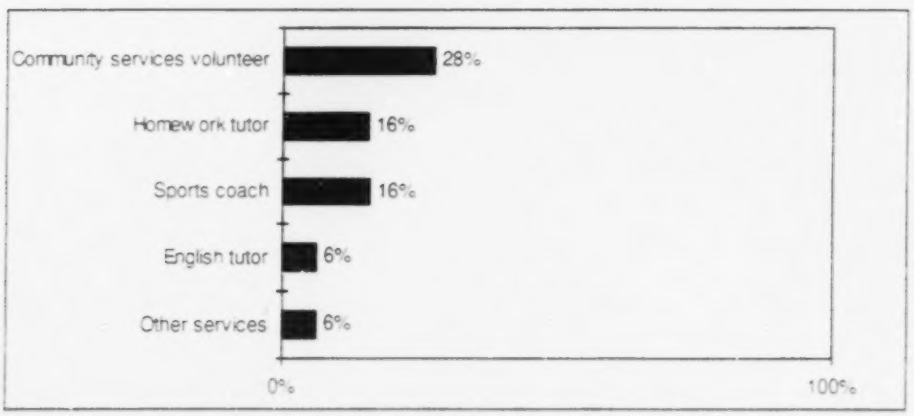
Forty-one percent of the students surveyed reported they had been helpers at school at some point. Figure 9 shows the types of volunteer services in which students participated in school. Serving as reading buddies for students who needed help and tutoring at school were the two most popular types of volunteer work reported by students.[8]

Figure 9: Types of Volunteer Services Offered by Secondary Students in School, 1997 (% of all secondary students)



Half of the students (51%) had involved in volunteer work outside of school. The most popular types of work included working in community services (such as hospital and food banks), homework tutoring, and coaching sports. (See Figure 10.)

Figure 10: Types of Volunteer Services Offered by Secondary Students Outside of School, 1997 (% of all secondary students)



[8] The percentages in the figure are based on all students in the survey, not only those who volunteered.

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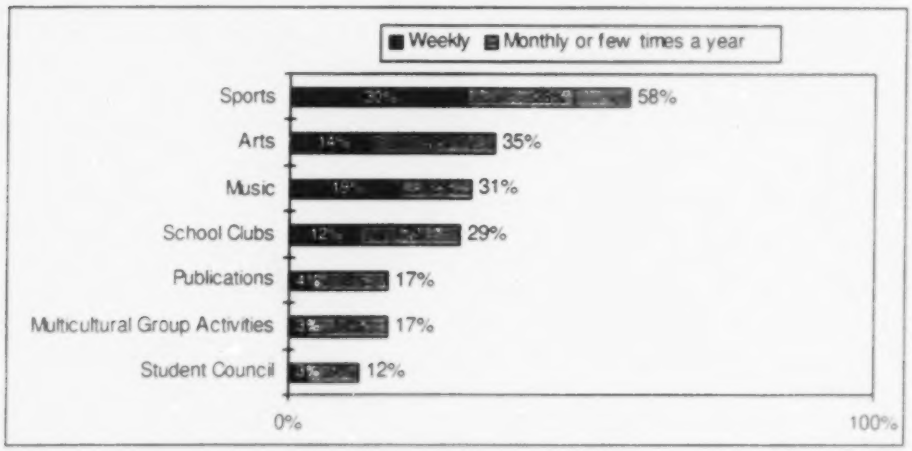
Extracurricular activities

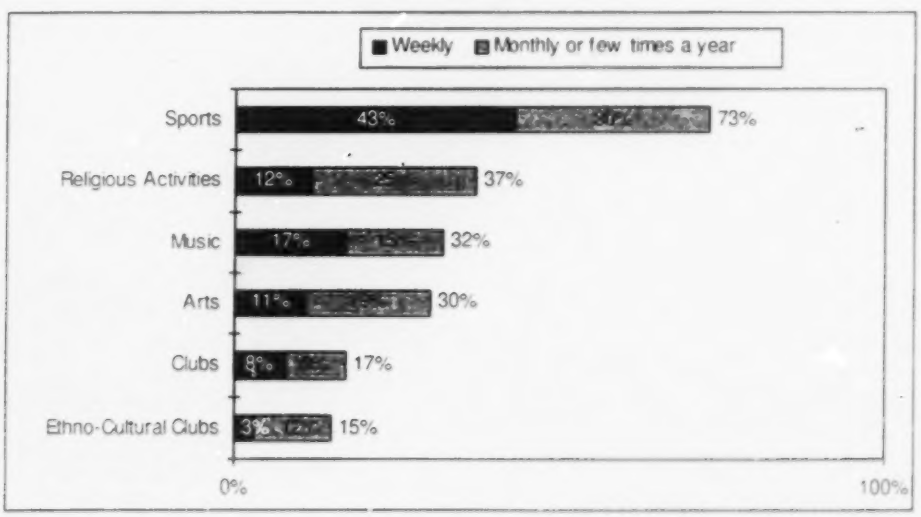
Three-quarters (75%) of secondary students participated in school extracurricular activities at least a few times a year. They were most likely to be involved in sports, arts, music and school clubs. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11: Secondary Student Participation in School Extracurricular Activities, 1997 (% of all secondary students)



The majority (81%) of secondary students also participated in after-school activities outside of school at least a few times a year. The most common involvement included sports, religious, music and arts activities. (See Figure 12.)

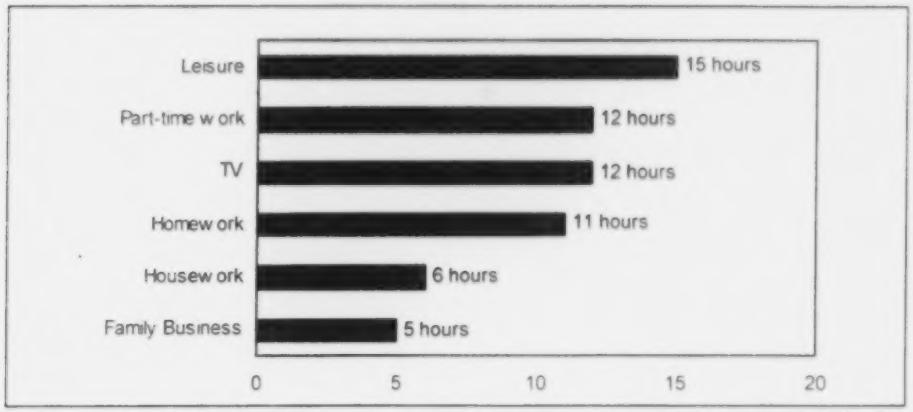
Figure 12: Secondary Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities outside of School, 1997 (% of all secondary students)



Amount of time students spent on various activities after school

Secondary school students were asked to report the average hours per week they spent on various after-school activities. The data show that they spent most time on leisure activities[9] (15 hr per week), followed by part-time work and television (both 12 hr per week), homework (11 hr.), housework (6 hr.)[10] and helping with family business (5 hr.). (See Figure 13.)

Figure 13: Average Hours per Week Secondary Students Spent on Various Activities, 1997



Part-time work

Half (50%) of Toronto secondary students reported they worked part-time and/or helped with their family business. Table 9 shows that the ten most frequent part-time jobs[11] held by students were mostly unskilled work in the service sector.

Table 9: Part-Time Jobs held by Secondary Students, 1997

Part-time jobs	% of employed students	% of all students
cashier/store clerk	23%	5%
baby-sitter	20%	4%
waiter/waitress/busboy/fast food worker	16%	3%
sports instructor/life guard	8%	2%
teacher/tutor	6%	1%
labourer	6%	1%
sales person	5%	1%
office clerk	4%	<1%
delivery/courier	3%	<1%
factory/warehouse worker	2%	<1%

[9] Examples of leisure activities included going to movies, talking on the phone, listening to music, going to the mall, dancing, and reading.

[10] Examples of housework included baby-sitting, lawn mowing, cooking, snow removal, and laundry.

[11] The list includes only part-time work other than family businesses.

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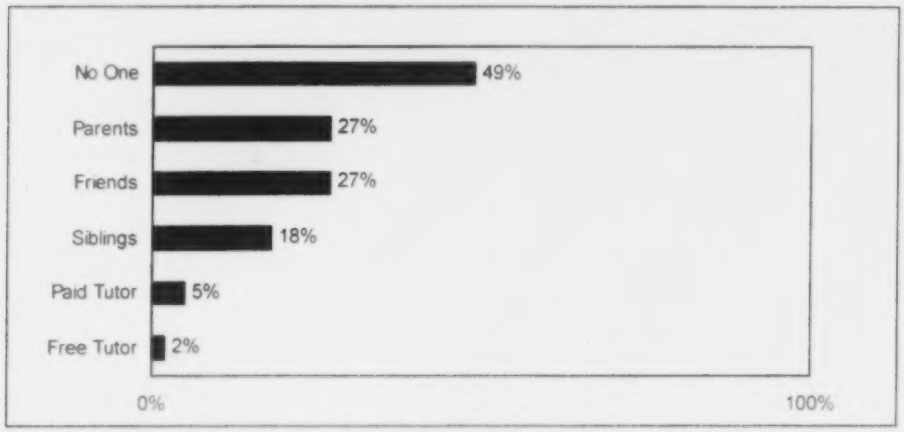
Homework practices

Most students (87%) reported their usual place to do homework was their own home. Only 8% indicated that they did their homework in more than one location (such as home, public library, and a friend's house) on a regular basis.

About half of the secondary students reported receiving help for their homework, mainly from their parents, friends, or siblings. Only a small percentage had access to paid or free tutor support. (See Figure 14.)

Figure 14: Persons Who Helped Secondary Students with Homework, 1997

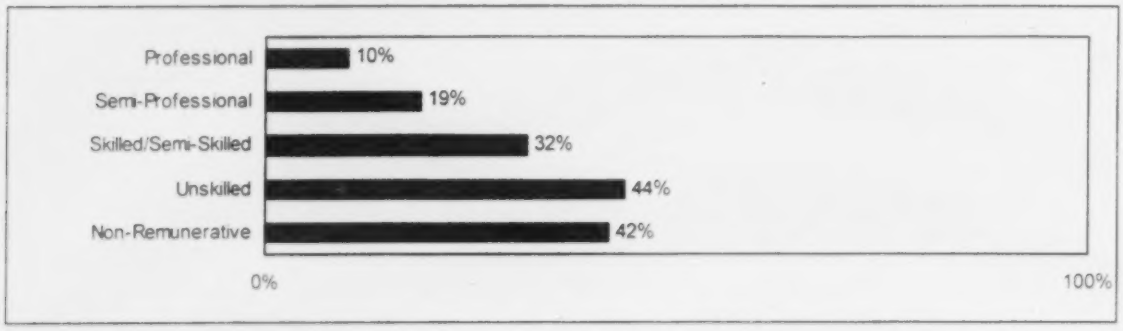


Part IV: Computer use

Frequency of computer use

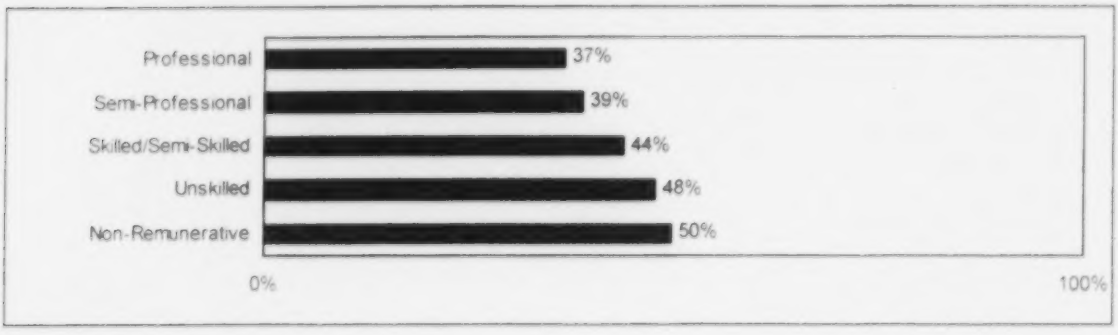
According to the survey, about 1 in 4 (27%) of the Toronto secondary school students had little or no access to computers at home. Not surprisingly, the access to home computers is related to the students' SES (socio-economic status). More students from lower SES homes were without computers than those from higher SES homes. Specifically, the percentages of students without a home computer ranged from 42% (for students whose parents were without paid jobs), to 10% (for those from families where at least one parent had a professional job). (See Figure 15.)

Figure 15 : Availability of Home Computers by Parents' Occupation
(% of students who have little or no access to home computers)



However, it is worth noting that the lack of computer at home for the economical disadvantaged students was compensated by the availability of school computers. Indeed, further analysis shows that half of the students whose parents had no paid jobs used the school computers on a frequent basis (daily or 1-2 times a week) compared to about one-third (37%) of the students with parents in professional jobs. (See Figure 16.) This lessened the technological gap between the rich and poor that existed outside of school.

Figure 16: Access to School Computers by Parents' Occupation
(% of students who used the school computers on a frequent basis)



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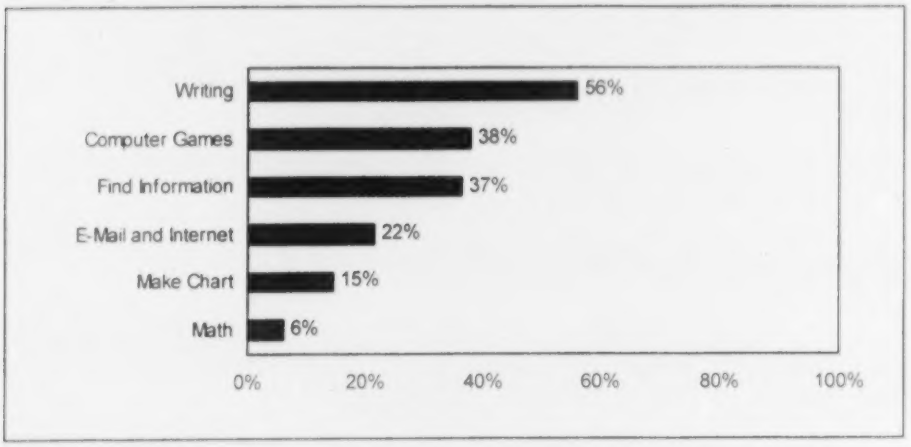
Types of computer use

The most frequent uses of computer for secondary students were writing/word processing (56%), playing games (38%), information search (37%), and accessing the E-mail and Internet (22%). (See Figure 17.)

Figure 17: Types of Computer Use for Secondary Students, 1997
(% of students who did the following tasks daily or 1-2 times a week)



Part V: Other findings about the Toronto Secondary students

Program level

In 1997, 70% of the Grade 10 to OAC students were in Advanced program, 15% in Advanced/General programs, 12% in General programs, 1% in Basic programs and less than 1% in destreamed programs.

Direct comparison with the 1991 results is difficult because of the province-wide destreaming of all Grade nine students during the last few years, and also the different ways this question was asked in the 1991 and 1997 surveys.[12]

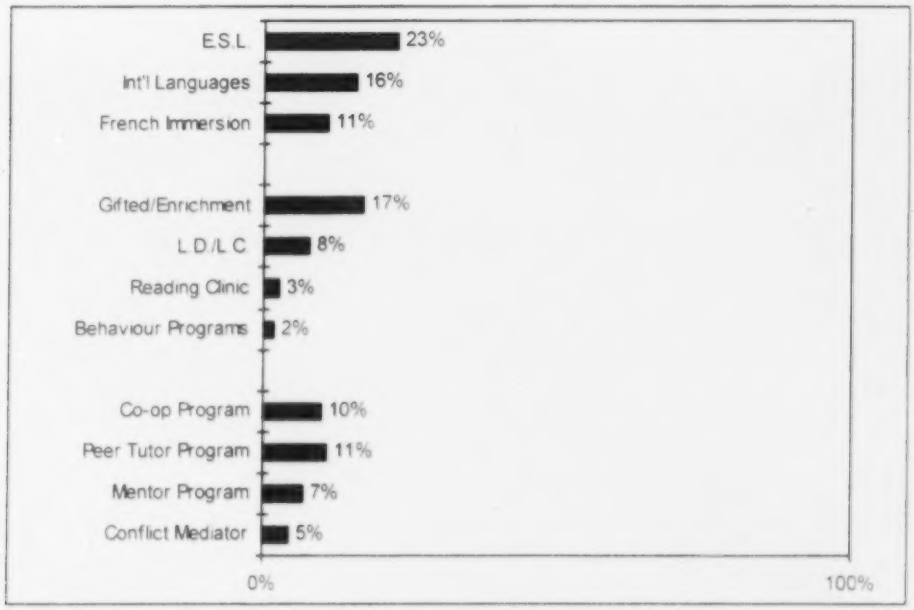
Special program enrolment

In terms of language programs, about a quarter (23%) of the secondary students reported they had taken ESL programs in their school career. Sixteen percent had enrolled in International Language classes and 11% in full-time French Immersion programs.

Regarding the special education programs, 17% of secondary students reported having enrolled in Gifted/Enrichment programs and 8% in Learning Disabled/Learning Centre programs. Less than 5% indicated that they had enrolled in Reading Clinic or Behavioural programs.

The percentages of students who had participated in Co-op Education and Peer Tutoring were 10% and 11% respectively. (See Figure 18.)

Figure 18: Special Program Enrolment for Secondary Students, 1997



[12] In 1991, students were given four program levels to check off: Advanced, General, Basic and Destreamed, but in 1997, students were given five categories: Advanced, Advanced and General, General, Basic and Destreamed.

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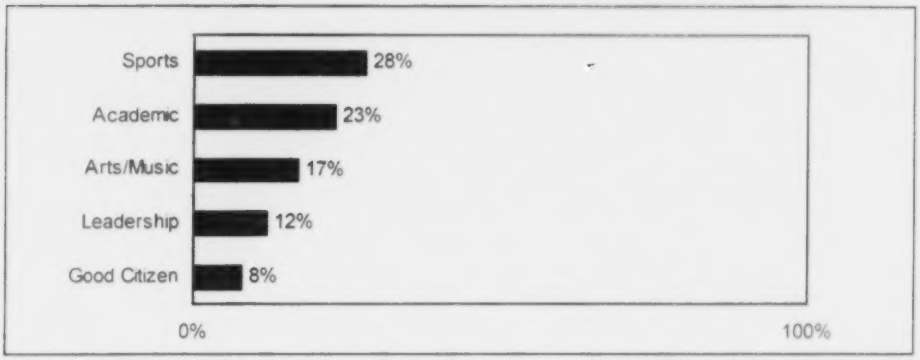
Awards received in school and out of school

About half of the students had received at least one award in school (56%) or outside of school (50%) in the past.

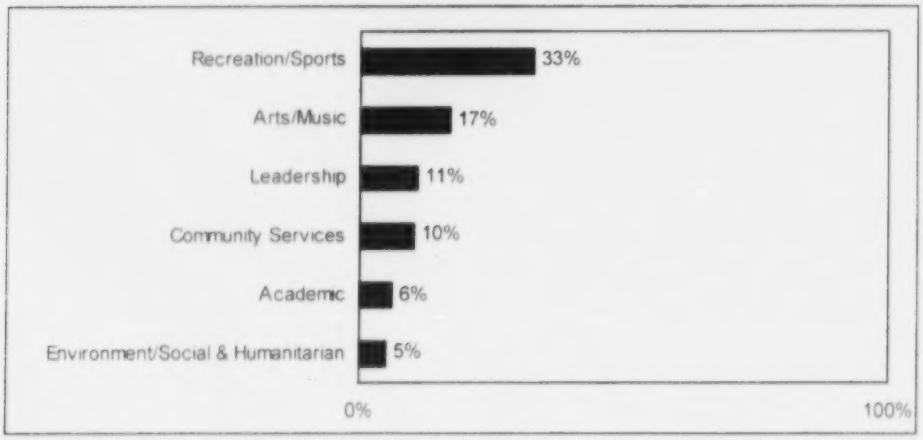
Figure 19 shows that the most common school awards received by secondary students were in sports and academic subjects -- Language, Math, and Science.[13]

Figure 19: Awards Received by Secondary Students in School, 1997
(% of all secondary students)



Awards in sports and recreation topped the list of awards received by secondary students outside of school. (See Figure 20.)

Figure 20: Awards Received by Secondary Students Outside of School, 1997
(% of all secondary students)

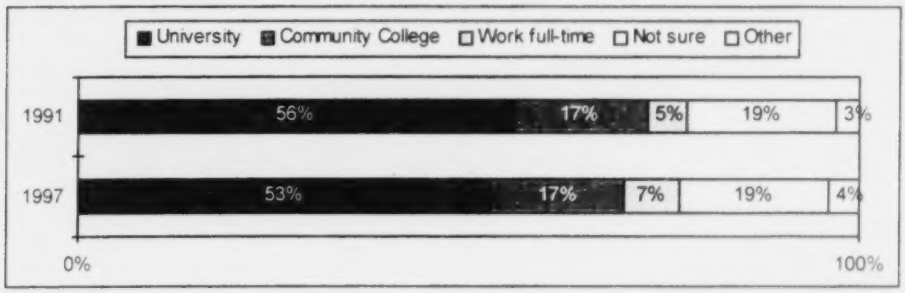


[13] The percentages in the above figures are based on all secondary students in the survey, and not just the award recipients.

Students' future school and career plans

Almost all secondary students (99%) indicated that they planned to graduate from high school. When asked about their immediate plans after high school, over half (53%) intended to go to university, about one fifth (17%) to community college and another one-fifth (19%) were uncertain about their plans. The proportion who planned to work full-time was 7%. (See Figure 21.)

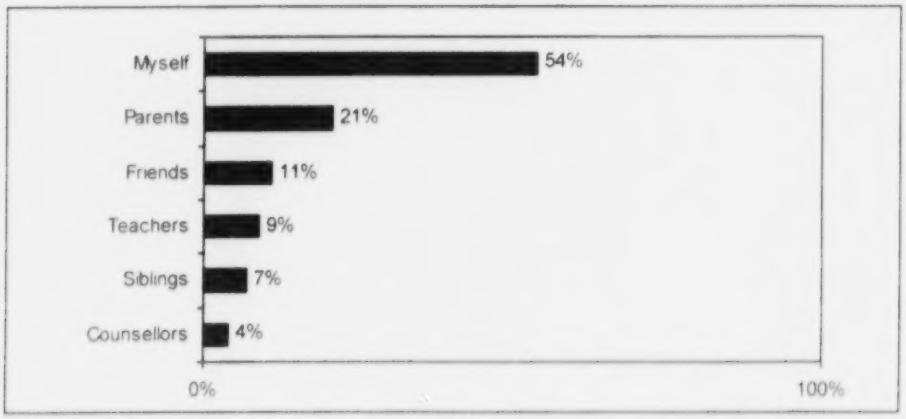
Figure 21: Post Secondary School Plans of Secondary Students, 1991 and 1997



According to the survey, about a quarter (24%) of the secondary students had a career in mind. The top five careers aspired by male secondary students (in descending order of frequency) were computer programmer/analyst, engineer, self-employed, doctor, and mechanic. On the other hand, the top five careers aspired by female students were doctor, teacher, lawyer, self-employed and accountant.

Over half (54%) of the students indicated that they made their future career decisions on their own. The other sources of guidance and suggestions they received included their parents, friends, teachers, siblings, and guidance counsellors. (See Figure 22.)

Figure 22: Sources of Help for Secondary Students Regarding Future Career Decisions, 1997



Thirty-nine percent of the secondary students felt that their school gave them enough help in planning their future careers. The remaining sixty percent were either not sure or felt that the school did not give them enough guidance in their future career. Of these, about one-third (36%) clearly indicated that they would like to receive school guidance in choosing a career.

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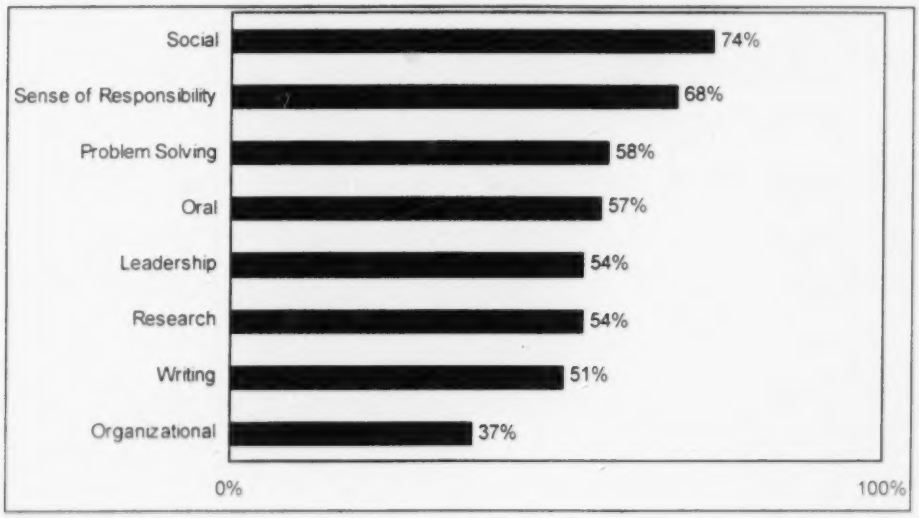
Students' self assessment of various skills

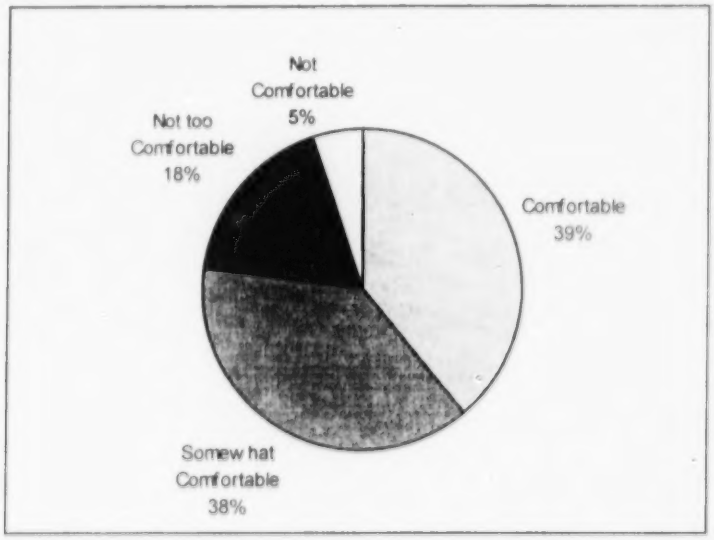
The majority of secondary students rated themselves 'very good' or 'good' in most skills, and especially in social skills (74%) and in being responsible (68%). However, only about one-third considered themselves good in organizational skills (37%). (See Figure 23.)

Figure 23: Secondary Students' Self Evaluation of Skills, 1997
(% of students who rated themselves "very good" or "good")



About three-quarters (77%) of secondary students felt comfortable or somewhat comfortable in speaking up in class. (See Figure 24.)

Figure 24: Students' Level of Comfort in Speaking up in Class, 1997

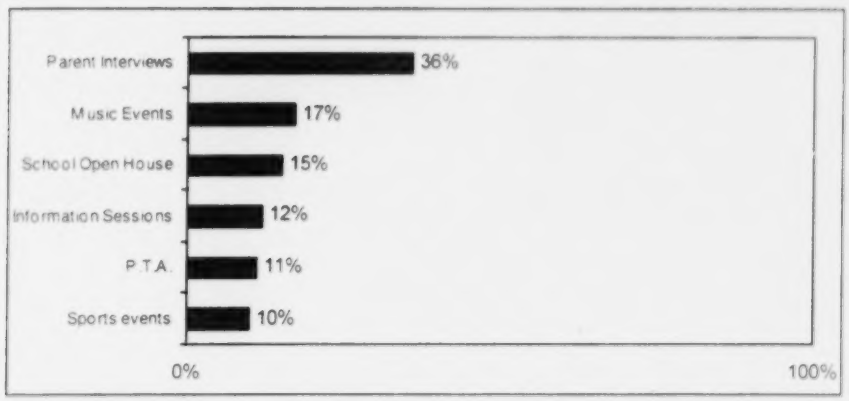


Part VI: Parental involvement

Parental involvement in school activities

Less than half (45%) of the students indicated that their parents participated in school activities on a regular basis, that is, "all the time" or "often". The level of participation for parents ranged from about one-third (36%) for teacher-parent interviews to one-tenth for sports events. (See Figure 25.)

Figure 25: Parental Involvement of Secondary Students, 1997
(% of students whose parents participated in various school activities "all the time/often")



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Appendix 1

Distribution of Students by Country of Birth in each region

Region	Countries	% of students born in each region
Asia	China	24%
	Vietnam	27%
	Sri Lanka	12%
	Philippines	10%
	Hong Kong	7%
	Other	20%
	TOTAL	100%
Europe	Portugal/Azores	25%
	Poland	14%
	Russia	9%
	Yugoslavia	8%
	Ukraine	8%
	United Kingdom	7%
	Romania	6%
	Other	23%
	TOTAL	100%
Caribbean	Jamaica	54%
	Trinidad/Tobago	29%
	Grenada	5%
	Other	12%
	TOTAL	100%
South & Central America	Guyana	25%
	El Salvador	17%
	Ecuador	9%
	Brazil	7%
	Guatemala	7%
	Peru	6%
	Nicaragua	5%
	Other	24%
	TOTAL	100%
Africa	Ethiopia	36%
	Somalia	25%
	Eritrea	7%
	Other	32%
	TOTAL	100%
Middle East	Iran	47%
	Turkey	29%
	Israel	5%
	Other	19%
	TOTAL	100%

Appendix 2

Distribution of Secondary Students by Cultural Religious Backgrounds

Religion	Cultural Groups	% of students in each religion
Christian (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant)	British/English speaking	23%
	Portuguese	15%
	Caribbean	9%
	Greek	6%
	Spanish/Latin American	6%
	Italian	5%
	Filipino	5%
	Chinese	5%
	Korean	4%
	Polish	3%
	Other	19%
	TOTAL	100%
Buddhist	Chinese	62%
	Vietnamese	31%
	Other	7%
	TOTAL	100%
Moslem	Pakistani	15%
	Somali	15%
	Bengali	10%
	East Indian	10%
	Iranian/Persian	9%
	Turkish	7%
	Caribbean	7%
	Ethiopian	6%
	Other	21%
	TOTAL	100%
Jewish	Jewish	89%
	British	3%
	Russian	1%
	Other	7%
	TOTAL	100%
Hindu	Tamil	61%
	East Indian	20%
	Caribbean	14%
	Other	5%
	TOTAL	100%

Appendix 3

Students' Perceptions of the Curriculum by Student Characteristics
(% of students who felt that the following topics have been covered in class all the time/often/sometimes)

Gender	Achievements/experiences of women
Female	74%
Male	70%

Socio-Economic Status	Achievements/experiences of:	
	Working Class	Poor People
Professional	48%	44%
Semi-Professional	47%	42%
Skilled	50%	45%
Unskilled	49%	43%
Non-remunerative	51%	47%

Race	Achievements/experiences of different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious groups
South Asian	78%
Aboriginal	77%
White	76%
Bi-racial/multi-racial	76%
East Asian	75%
South East Asian	74%
Middle Easterner	73%
Latin American	73%
Black	68%

Religion	Achievements/experiences of different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious groups
Hindu	79%
Christian	75%
Jewish	75%
Moslem	74%
Buddhist	73%

Whether student is Aboriginal	Achievements/experiences of First Nations/Native Canadian Peoples
Aboriginal	52%
Not Aboriginal	53%

Presence of Disability	Achievements/experiences of persons with Disabilities
Disabled	39%
Not Disabled	35%

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Appendix 4

Cost as a Barrier to Participation in School Activities by Socio-Economic Status of Students
(% of students who felt that cost was a barrier)

Parents' Occupation	Cost
Professional	18%
Semi-Professional	18%
Skilled	18%
Unskilled	17%
Non-remunerative	18%

Gender as a Barrier to Participation in School activities by Male and Female Students
(% of students who felt that gender was a barrier)

Gender of Students	Gender as a Barrier
Female	13%
Male	4%

Race/Culture/Religion as a Barrier to Participation in School activities by Race of Students
(% of students who felt that race/culture/religion was a barrier)

Race of Students	Race/Culture/Religion as a Barrier
South Asian	19%
Black	15%
South East Asian	14%
East Asian	11%
Aboriginal	9%
Middle Easterner	9%
Latin American	9%
Bi-racial/multi-racial	6%
White	4%

Race/Culture/Religion as a Barrier to Participation in School activities by Religion of Students
(% of students who felt that race/culture/religion was a barrier)

Religion of Students	Race/Culture/Religion as a Barrier
Moslem	18%
Hindu	14%
Buddhist	12%
Christian	7%
Jewish	4%

Disability as a Barrier to Participation in School activities by Students with and without Disability
(% of students who felt that disability was a barrier)

Presence of Disability	Disability as a Barrier
Disabled	18%
Not Disabled	2%

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